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AUTHOR Angle, Harold L.
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ABSTRACT

It has been suggested that different forms of organizational commitment have different outcomes as well as different antecedents. To test the hypothesis that instrumental attachment to an organization is associated with members' investments in the organization, and that affective attachment to an organization is influenced primarily by the way the organization treats its members (a process of reciprocation), professional and paraprofessional hospital employees (N=727), and bank clerical employees (N=154) were tested. Subjects completed Porter's Organizational Commitment Questionnaire; measures of instrumental attachment, job satisfaction, and personal attributes; and a measure of existence, relatedness, and growth needs. Multiple regression analyses and simple correlation were used to measure differential relationships between the two forms of attachments and two types of antecedents. Mixed support was found for the relationship between instrumental attachment and committing investment, and affective attachment and reciprocation with the organization. The development of measurement instruments specifically designed to sort out different forms of attachment may be required. (MCF)

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CORRELATES OF INSTRUMENTAL AND AFFECTIVE ATTACHMENT TO ORGANIZATIONS

Harold L. Angle
School of Management
University of Minnesota
271 19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

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ABSTRACT

Researchers in organizational behavior who have studied "organizational commitment" have, for the most part, actually been studying psychological attachment. Rather than constituting a single phenomenon, such attachments can take multiple forms which may, in turn, be associated with various antecedents. Separate instruments were used to measure instrumental and affective organizational attachments. Multiple regression analysis and simple correlation were used to measure the differential relationships between the two types of antecedents and the two forms of attachment. Mixed support was provided for a hypothesis which proposed that instrumental attachment is a result of committing investments while affective attachment results from reciprocation with the organization.

CORRELATES OF INSTRUMENTAL AND AFFECTIVE ATTACHMENT TO ORGANIZATIONS

INTRODUCTION

As work organizations move into the postindustrial age (Trist, 1976), it is incumbent upon management to find new ways of motivating, directing and sustaining pro-organizational behaviors. There may be an ever-increasing need to motivate employees to perform such spontaneous and innovative behaviors as are demanded by decentralization, unstructured jobs and unforeseen contingencies (Katz, 1964). It is suggested that one such means might be through inculcation of organizational commitment. Commitment processes have commanded the attention of psychologists and sociologists for the past several years. Unfortunately, the term "commitment" has been used in a number of different ways, and each unique usage appears to hold somewhat different implications, both for antecedents and for outcomes.

Such structuralists as Becker (1960) have treated commitment as an externally-imposed consistency in future behaviors which has been brought about by the individual's investments, over time. Also treating one's own behavior as the antecedent condition to commitment are such social psychologists as Kiesler (1971) and Salancik (1977).

A major alternative to the structuralist/social-psychological view of commitment has been the so-called "organizational behavior" school (Staw, 1977). Here, both the antecedents and outcomes of commitment are seen as complex (e.g., Steers, 1977). As antecedents of commitment, not only are what the individual brings to the organization and what s/he does there included; what happens to the individual seems singularly influential. That is, the way the organization treats the individual makes a difference.

Unlike the behavioral (i.e., structuralist/social-psychological) approach, the organizational behavior school treats commitment as attachment to a social system. As Kanter (1968) suggested, such attachments may take diverse forms and each may have unique antecedents.

Angle and Perry (1981) suggested that different forms of commitment have different outcomes, as well as different clusters of antecedents. Their data offered some support for the hypothesis that, while one type of commitment has its principal effect on March and Simon's (1958) participation, another form was more strongly associated with the motivation to produce.

If, indeed, attachment to the organization can take multiple forms, and if various forms hold different outcome implications, the question arises whether organizations can perhaps learn to manage the types of attachments their members develop.

For the present study, it was hypothesized that instrumental attachment to membership should be associated with the

"investments" that the member has made in organizational membership, rather than with the way the organization has treated the member. Conversely, it was hypothesized that affective attachment would have its primary correlates in the way the organization has treated the member; i.e., in the organization's holding up its end of the psychological contract (Schein, 1980), through a process of reciprocation between member and organization (Levinson, 1965).

METHOD

Participants and Procedure.

The participant sample was comprised of professional and paraprofessional members of the nursing departments of two hospitals (N = 727), and clerical employees of 28 branches of a large West-Coast bank (N =154). Responses were anonymous and the total N of 881 represented a usable response rate of 32 percent.

Measures.

Affective Attachment. Affective attachment was measured by a slightly modified version of Porter's Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). Factor analysis of the scale revealed a single factor, and Cronbach's alpha was .93.

Instrumental Attachment. Instrumental attachment was measured by a scale originated by Ritzer and Trice (1969) and modified by Hrebiniak and Alutto (1973). In contrast to the OCQ, the

tone of the Ritzer and Trice instrument is specifically calculative. Cronbach's alpha was .89.

Overall Job Satisfaction. Overall (i.e., facet-free) job satisfaction was measured by a three-item scale drawn from the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Quinn & Staines, 1979). Cronbach's alpha was .79.

E-R-G Need Reinforcers. Three descriptive-format scales were constructed to measure the extent to which Alderfer's (1972) existence, relatedness and growth needs were provided for by the job. Scale reliabilities and number of items were:

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Existence	7	.69
Relatedness	10	.77
Growth	5	.78

Committing Investments. Six personal attributes and self-assessments which Becker (1960) would categorize as committing investments or "side bets" were included in the questionnaire instrument. These were: Seniority, Income, Age, Education, Breadwinner Status, and Perceived Availability of Alternative Employment

RESULTS

The Pearson correlation between the measures of instrumental attachment and affective attachment was .48.

Multiple regression analysis was employed to assess the relationships between (1) need reinforcers and (2) committing

investments, on each form of organizational attachment. Tables 1 and 2 present the results of those analyses.

Insert Tables 1 and 2 About Here

The set of need reinforcers accounted for 40% of the variance in affective attachment, and 24% of the variance in instrumental attachment. By contrast, the set of committing investments explained lesser, and about equal, amounts of variance in the two forms of attachment (6% and 5%, respectively).

While all three need reinforcers were significant in each regression, such was not the case for the committing investments. Seniority was significant only for instrumental attachment; conversely, education level was significant only for affective attachment. Surprisingly, neither income level nor breadwinner status was significant in either regression.

Table 3 shows the Pearson correlations between need reinforcers, job satisfaction and the committing investments, and each type of organizational attachment, along with the differences for the two sets of correlations. For each of the need reinforcers, as well as for overall satisfaction, there is a stronger relationship with affective than with instrumental attachment.

Insert Table 3 About Here

The results for the committing investments are less straightforward. Clearest support for the hypothesized relation ships comes from the correlations for Seniority and Income. Although the pattern is in the correct direction for Age, the difference between correlations is not statistically significant. Education level was (negatively) related to affective attachment but not to instrumental attachment. Breadwinner Status was unrelated to either form of attachment and Perceived Job Alternatives was related about equally to both.

DISCUSSION

Relationships between the two general classes of antecedents and the two forms of organizational atttachment were less clear-cut than had been hypothesized; yet, the overall pattern of results suggests that: (1) for affective forms of attachment, the "reciprocation" model seems well-supported; (2) Certain variables which Becker (1960) would categorize as investments or "side bets," are more strongly related to instrumental than to affective attachments.

Also as would be predicted by the structuralists there was a negative relationship between perceived job alternatives and attachment to the present organization; however, this relation ship was at least as pronounced for affective attachment as for instrumental attachment. This suggests that perhaps a rationalization process (not unlike that suggested by the cognitive-

consistency view of commitment) may take place so that bonds which originated in economic entrapment may eventually engender positive affect toward the relationship.

Perhaps the major anomaly was the lack of relationship between breadwinner status and calculative involvement. The essential notion behind calculative involvement is one of the proverbial "golden handcuffs." It would thus be anticipated that, to the extent the employee is responsible for the economic security of his/her household, s/he would tend to feel "locked-in" to the job. No such relationship appeared in the data. Moreover, this finding is not an isolated one. Angle and Perry (1978) reported that organizational commitment was (non-significantly) lower for individuals whose income was the primary means of family-unit support.

The most complex relationship in the data seems to be that between education level and attachment. On the one hand, the investment of years of career-relevant education may, for some, comprise the sort of sunk costs that might be recouped only by staying with the job (and therefore the employing organization) indefinitely. On the other hand, this educational investment, rather than locking the individual into one organization, might provide the skill-marketability that provides the employee feasible alternatives.

In terms of the reciprocation hypothesis, the (negative) relationship between education level and affective attachment was not unexpected. According to Adams' (1965) Theory of Inequity,

the inputs of such individuals are automatically higher, leading to elevated expectations regarding the organization's contributions.

With respect to education level and calculative involvement, it may be that some of the participants saw their education as sunk costs while others saw it as expanding their alternatives, thus neutralizing each other (see Table 2). Accordingly, education might act as an uncontaminated "side bet" only in such single-organization careers as the Roman Catholic priesthood, or the U. S. Forest Service (Hall & Schneider,1972).

Another puzzle presented by the data was the pair of relationships between perceived job alternatives and each form of attachment. The "locking-in" hypothesis of the structuralists would predict such a relationship for calculative attachment, but there is no such readily-accessible logic for the equally-strong relationship encountered with affective attachment. As was suggested for education, perhaps the answer lies in the rationalization process; i.e., employes who see few alternatives for employment come to reshape their perceptions of the present organization to rationalize their bondage.

CONCLUSION

Two well-established instruments were employed to measure two forms of organizational attachment; calculative and affective. That these instruments were tapping somewhat different

underlying constructs was supported by the relatively low correlation between them and by the different relationships each had with several suggested antecedents of organizational attachment. Yet, the findings, though somewhat supportive of the hypothesis, were not fully consistent with one another.

Two possible reasons are suggested. In the first place, there is conceptual overlap between the two forms of attachment, albeit in a unidirectional sense. While an instrumental attachment implies no necessary affective bond to the organization, it is difficult to conceive of someone who is affectively attached but has no reluctance to leave.

The other possible reason for contamination may lie in available instrumentation. Although it makes sense to use well-documented instruments for early research, it appears that the development of new measures will be a necessary next step -- measures designed explicitly to sort out different forms of organizational attachment.

The term "organizational commitment" has been used to describe too many disparate phenomena, resulting in a hodge-podge of unreplicated research. This paper urges a new effort to define and discriminate between distinct forms of commitment.

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TABLE 1

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS: ORGANIZATIONAL ATTACHMENT AND NEED REINFORCERS

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: AFFECTIVE ATTACHMENT (N = 881)

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficients	Simple r	F-ratio
Existence	.24	.47***	63.2***
Relatedness	.14	.47***	17.8***
Growth	.40	.57***	151.5***

Regression F-ratio = 197.4***

Adjusted R^2 = .40

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: INSTRUMENTAL ATTACHMENT (N = 881)

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficients	Simple r	F-ratio
Existence	.20	.38***	34.0***
Relatedness	.15	.39***	14.7***
Growth	.26	.43***	46.1***

Regression F-ratio = 87.6***

Adjusted R^2 = .24

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* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

TABLE 2

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS: ORGANIZATIONAL ATTACHMENT AND COMMITTING INVESTMENTS

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: AFFECTIVE ATTACHMENT (N = 881)

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficients	Simple r	F-ratio
Seniority	-.03	.06	0.6
Income	-.01	-.05	0.0
Age	.18	.16***	18.8***
Education	-.14	-.15***	11.7***
Breadwinner Status	-.05	-.04	2.3
Perceived Job Alternatives	-.13	-.16***	14.7***

Regression F-ratio = 10.1* Adjusted R^2 = .06

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: INSTRUMENTAL ATTACHMENT (N = 881)

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficients	Simple r	F-ratio
Seniority	.08	.19***	4.2*
Income	.06	.11**	2.2
Age	.12	.21***	8.8**
Education	-.03	.01	0.5
Breadwinner Status	-.02	.01	0.5
Perceived Job Alternatives	-.09	-.13***	7.7**

Regression F-ratio = 7.8** Adjusted R^2 = .05

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

TABLE 3

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL ATTACHMENT, NEED REINFORCERS, AND COMMITTING INVESTMENTS

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	FORM OF ATTACHMENT: AFFECTIVE	CALCULATIVE	DIFFERENCE
Need Reinforcers:			
Existence	.47***	.38***	.09*
Relatedness	.47***	.39***	.08*
Growth	.57***	.42***	.15**
Overall Job Satisfaction:	.71***	.44***	.27***
Committing Investments:			
Seniority	.06	.19***	.13**
Income	-.05	.11***	.16**
Age	.16***	.21***	.05
Education	-.15***	.01	.16**
Breadwinner Status	-.04	.01	.05
Perceived Job Alternatives	-.15***	-.13***	.02

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$